

Meeting Minutes
CJCC Subcommittee
Empowering Reentry & Reducing Recidivism
Jury Room B, Law & Justice Center
May 5, 2010

Present:

Eric Brewer
Jenna Caplette
Connie Campell
Jim Cashell
Vicki DeBoer
Matthew Cyr
Pat Donath
Michael Dunham
Steve Ette
Brian Gootkin
Marty Lambert
Jack Pollari
Ray Ross
Randy VanOsdol
Sylvan Young

Guests: Chief of Police Steve Allender and Community Development Director Barbara Garcia both from Rapid City, South Dakota.

Meeting Minutes:

Co-Chair Marty Lambert called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm and asked those attending to introduce themselves and state who they represented. Marty noted that the agenda for this meeting was to meet with Barbara Garcia and Chief Allender and have a time to ask follow-up questions from the presentation they just gave at the CJCC meeting the previous hour (in the attachment to these minutes is the information they covered at that meeting). The minutes from the previous meeting were unanimously approved as they stand. Marty thanked Randy VanOsdol for taking the minutes at the last meeting and Co-chair Roxanne Klingensmith for chairing that meeting. It was noted that Roxanne was unable to be at this meeting due to an emergency appendectomy about 36 hours earlier.

Marty introduced Barbara Gracia and Chief Allender and opened up the meeting for questions addressed to them.

1. What is the definition of recidivism that you use in your reentry program in Rapid City?

When an offender is reincarcerated within 5 years or the funding source will dictate what

definition to use. Different grants and funding sources will require that you use their definition and if you want to work with them you must use their definition.

2. How difficult was it working with the Department of Corrections in South Dakota to get the information they had on the offenders about to return to your area?

Not too difficult because they saw the need. The DOC felt they had a good transitional program in place within the prison system that was not working as effectively as it could because there was no follow-up after the offender was discharged. They were willing to work with the Rapid City Offender Reentry Program because they realized what they were doing was not enough.

3. What do you tell probation and parole if you are working with someone and you know they have done something wrong?

There is good communication between the case manager of each person they work with and their probation or parole officer if they have one. They have developed a matrix or a "continuum of sanctions" that they use to determine an appropriate response to each violation. Some violations require the offender be set back to prison others do not. Because the probation or parole officer has the power to send the offender back to prison is the one of the main reasons they can not be a mentor to the offender.

4. Who are you actually dealing with in your program?

Anybody who wants help. People get referred to their program. They can be referred from federal, state, county or city correctional facilities. A police officer can refer people to them as can different agencies and a person can even refer him or herself. However, once you start receiving state funds you can only use those funds for people who meet their qualifications. This wasn't a problem when they first started because they weren't using any state funds, but now that they have applied for some government grants this is an issue.

5. You have a goal of reducing recidivism by 10% this year, how are you doing?

So far it looks good that this goal will be reached.

6. How do the mentors fit into your program?

In looking at the most effective reentry programs around the country it was discovered that mentors were a common component of each of them. A training program has been set up and is continuing to be upgraded. Mentors simply spend time with the offenders and build relationships and introduce them to a different way to life than many of them have known before. Most mentors have to be taught how to set boundaries (like not giving offenders money), how to recognize manipulative behavior, how to tell the difference between when someone is not taking their meds and when they are just having a bad day and other issues like

these. People from all different organizations and faith communities help with this but they need good training. The Rapid City folks would be very willing to share with us their training material.

7. What is the percentage of people you are dealing with who have drug and/or alcohol issues?

It is very high. But looking at the information supplied online by the MT DOC it looks like ours could be even higher in Montana. Around 75% in South Dakota compared with over 90% here. This is obviously a huge problem and these addictions are very difficult to overcome, especially alcohol addiction since the addict's body becomes physically dependent on the substance. In Rapid City they have a thirty bed Detox Center that is used a lot but they are looking at other models, like the one in San Antonio, TX that is working much better than what they are doing in Rapid City.

Marty had to leave early and asked Randy if he would finish chairing the meeting. Randy thanked our guests for their time, insight and willingness to be a future resource for us in our work. Then the meeting was adjourned.

The next subcommittee meeting will be on Wednesday, June 2, 2010.